

JOHN J. S. HASSLER.

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FEBRUARY 28, 1869.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House and ordered to be printed.

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Mr. YODER, from the Committee on Military Affairs, submitted the following

REPORT:

[To accompany bill H. R. 11632.]

The Committee on Military Affairs, to whom was referred the bill (H. R. 11632) to place John J. S. Hassler on the retired list of the U. S. Army, has considered the same and submits the following report:

The records of the Historical Society of New York show that a small band of citizens of that State organized the first movement to raise volunteers for the protection of the Union against threats of hostilities which had followed the election of Mr. Lincoln to the Presidency. Among these citizens was John J. S. Hassler, then a law student in the city of New York, who in the month of December, 1860, met with a few associates and, in the belief that a conflict was impending, proceeded to form the nucleus of a military organization whose services were to be tendered, in case of need, to the Government of the United States. The organization was actually formed in the months of January and February following, and was several months prior to any similar steps taken by other citizens. To the city of New York and to the little band of patriotic youths, of whom Captain Hassler was one of the most active and earnest, must be given the credit for the pioneer effort in organizing the grand army of volunteers who came to the defense of the Union in the time of its greatest need.

Out of this organization sprang, in great part, the following commands, viz: Ninth New York State Militia; Tenth, Fifteenth, Thirty-first, Thirty-seventh, and Thirtieth Regiments New York Volunteers.

Captain Hassler was commissioned by the governor captain of Company A, Thirty-first Regiment New York Volunteers. The regiment was soon fully organized, and early in May, 1861, it was ordered to Washington, and arrived at that city May 21. After a delay of a few days it moved forward with the Army of Northeast Virginia and engaged in the battle of Bull Run July 21, as is more fully recited in the Records of the Rebellion (Volume II, Series I, page 434), in which reference is made to the part borne therein by Captain Hassler. From July 22, 1861, to March, 1862, the regiment was engaged in the construction of field-works in the vicinity of Alexandria, Va.

In March, 1862, Captain Hassler joined the staff of General Jameson, then commanding a brigade in Kearny's division, and took part in the siege of Yorktown, May 4, and was the first man in the Union Army to

enter the enemy's works early on the morning of May 5. The same day he engaged in the battle of Williamsburgh, and on May 31 and June 1 in the battles of Seven Pines and Fair Oaks. For an account of his services in this campaign see *Records of the Rebellion*, vol. xi, series 1, pp. 844, 853, and 855. Ordered to accompany General Jameson, who was sick with typhoid fever, to Washington, D. C., Captain Hassler was engaged during the former's illness in drilling and preparing for the field volunteer regiments which arrived in Washington from time to time. Among these was the Twenty-fourth Michigan, whose officers, as well as the governor, Hon. Austin Blair, and the two Senators from that State, gave him testimonials of their appreciation of his gallantry, skill, and efficiency.

At this time Captain Hassler had served in the first two campaigns against Richmond. His conduct had repeatedly called forth honorable mention, and August 15, 1862, Governor William A. Newell wrote to the Secretary of War recommending that Captain Hassler be appointed a lieutenant in the regular Army. September 22, 1862, he was recommended for a captaincy in the regular Army by Brig. Gen. D. P. Woodbury, who stated:

Captain Hassler has served with distinction from the commencement of the war, being present at the battles of Bull Run, Williamsburgh, and Fair Oaks.

This recommendation was indorsed by Brigadier-General Birney and Col. H. A. Morrow (now colonel in the regular Army). October 26, 1862, Brigadier-General Hamilton, commanding the Army of the Mississippi, wrote to the Secretary of War that Captain Hassler's eminent services during the war gave him a claim to favorable consideration. A number of the most distinguished members of Congress united with Governors Blair, of Michigan, and Pierpont, of West Virginia, in the matter, and on February 19, 1863, Captain Hassler was commissioned by President Lincoln as second lieutenant Fourth Infantry United States Army.

He joined the regiment four days later, near Falmouth, Va. April 27 the regular division to which the regiment belonged moved to the Rappahannock, at Kelly's Ford, and thence on to and across the Rappahannock, at Ely's Ford; thence via Orange Court-House to Fredericksburgh. April 30 they struck the enemy, and driving them back about 2 miles, established a defensive position near Chancellorsville. May 1st the command participated in the battle of Chancellorsville, holding their position until May 4, when it moved back to the old camp, near Falmouth. July 1, 1863, the regiment had reached Hanover, Pa., and was ordered to proceed to Gettysburgh. July 2 the command took position in line of battle and were soon engaged. They were subjected to a terrible fire and suffered a loss of 40 per cent. of the men engaged. July 3 they were on Round Top, and July 5 moved in pursuit of the retreating army of Lee into Maryland, through a terrible storm, without rations, and, crossing the mountain, rested at Williamsport, Md., whence they proceeded to Fayetteville. August 3 they moved to the Rappahannock.

August 15, 1863, the regiment was sent to New York to assist in suppressing the riots occurring on account of the drafts.

April 1, 1864, the regiment rejoined the Army of the Potomac, near Alexandria, and took part, May 6th, in the battle of the Wilderness; May 16th, in the battle of Spottsylvania Court-House; May 24th, in the battle of North Anna River; June 2d and 3d, in the battle of Potopotamai Creek; June 17th, 18th, and 19th, they engaged in the attack on

the enemy's lines at Petersburg; June 22d, five companies were ordered as a guard for General Grant's headquarters at City Point, Va. While on this duty his faithful services in the field received a further recognition in his promotion to first lieutenant, same regiment, August 25, 1864.

In the meantime Captain Hassler had been wounded in the attack upon Petersburg, June 17, 1864. March 30, 1865, found General Grant again in the field in the forward movement of the Army of the Potomac against Petersburg, which, with Richmond, was evacuated April 2. The headquarters guard, composed of this portion of the Fourth Regiment, was in the pursuit day and night, and was present at the headquarters of the Army at Appomattox Court-House, and witnessed the surrender of General Lee and the army of Northern Virginia, April 9, 1865.

In the meantime Captain Hassler had received a further promotion, being commissioned captain by brevet "for gallant and meritorious services in front of Petersburg, Va., April 21, 1865."

After the surrender the regiment was detailed at Richmond on provost duty. July 13, 1865, they proceeded to New York, and on the 18th were ordered to Bedloe's Island. In September, 1865, Captain Hassler went with a detachment of men and officers to West Point and deposited the old colors of the regiment with those that had been carried through the Mexican war and the war of the rebellion. This regiment was a famous one. Ulysses S. Grant joined it as brevet second lieutenant September, 1845, served with it all through the war with Mexico and until his resignation from the Army in 1854, and, as has been stated above, in 1865, when in command of the armies of the United States, called the Fourth Infantry into service as guard to his headquarters, thus attesting his confidence in and affection for his old regiment.

After the termination of hostilities Captain Hassler took command of Company A, at Madison Barracks, Sackett's Harbor, N. Y. His subsequent stations were at Camp Angur, Omaha, Nebr., North Platte, and Fort Laramie. The latter point was reached after a march of 270 miles. Thence they proceeded to Fort Fetterman, where they remained until April, 1869, when the Fourth and Thirtieth United States Infantry Regiments were consolidated under an act of Congress.

Captain Hassler, under "waiting orders," proceeded to his home, but while en route he received instructions to report to the Secretary of the Interior for assignment to duty as Indian agent. He was placed in charge of the Chippewa Indians in Minnesota and held the agency until January, 1870, when he was relieved, and, October 15, 1870, was honorably discharged from the Army as provided in the act approved March 3, 1869.

Captain Hassler did not pass through his arduous military service unscathed. He bears upon his person honorable scars attesting his bravery, and the hardships of his many campaigns have left his constitution seriously impaired.

To sum up the record, your committee finds that Captain Hassler was one of the very first volunteers in the United States, a gallant and efficient officer who took part in the battles of Bull Run, Yorktown, Williamsburgh, Seven Pines, Fair Oaks, Chancellorsville, "The Wilderness," Spottsylvania Court-House, North Anna River, Potopotamai Creek, Petersburg, who has a record of battles beginning with Bull Run and ending with the surrender at Appomattox Court-House, who served

also in the Indian wars of 1867, 1868, and 1869 on the Upper Platte, making numerous expeditions into the Powder River and Black Hills against the Sioux Indians under Red Cloud and other leaders of that warlike tribe; who has been twice wounded in the service and has had his health shattered by exposures of many campaigns.

In view of the foregoing your committee is of the opinion that the bill is a meritorious one, and it is therefore reported back to the House with the recommendation that it do pass.

